8: Ewers E,G-4,5 (1941-1951) 1971 NF6 Blackfoot NF6

Blackfoot camps. "When ten or twelve tents were together, we were sure to see six or seven women mutilated in this manner."[7] However, this severe punishment for infidelity was discontinued by the middle 1870's.[8]

Stormy as their marital lives sometimes were, Blackfoot Indians were fond and indulgent parents. Large families were common. Some men claimed to have fathered more than a score of children by their several wives. The pregnant woman wore a broad, adjustable rawhide belt as her time approached. It supported and protected her when she rode horseback or engaged in active work. Sometimes an expectant mother's labor pains came while she was riding with a moving camp. She dropped out of the line of march and two or three hours later returned to the caravan with her newborn babe in her arms. Usually, however, the birth took place in a tipi. An elderly woman, experienced in midwifery, gave the mother a decoction of roots to drink to ease her pains and facilitate delivery. While the mother grasped one of the lodge poles and an assistant held her around the waist the midwife attended to the delivery, then laced the mother in her rawhide belt. Sometimes the mother resumed her household chores the next day.

A portion of the baby's navel cord was cut, dried, and preserved in a beaded buckskin case as the child's primitive health insurance. The cases for boys' navel cords were in the form of snakes; girls' were lizard-shaped. The Blackfeet believed that snakes and lizards were never sick and lived long lives. The child was bathed and wrapped in soft skin. Moss or a soft punk served in lieu of diapers.

A few days after the birth the father called upon some distinguished member of his band to name the child. The name was carefully chosen because it was believed to have an important influence on the child's life. Sometimes it was the name of a respected ancestor; at other times it commemorated a brave or generous act of the bestower or of the child's father. Lazy

[7] *Travels*, II, 110, 117, 136.
[8] Bradley, "Manuscript," *MHSC*, Vol. IX, 271.

cradleboard. Around this time[A] the child was also given a name.

Usually the father took care of the child-naming ceremony. If he was an outstanding man, or a holy man, he might name his own children. But most men brought their babies to noted elders. These were persons who had lived long and well, and whose prayers were known to be strong. The father always gave the elder some kind of present, or payment—maybe a horse, some blankets, or some money—sometimes all three, if he really wanted his child to have a good name at the start.

The chosen elder begins the naming ceremony by praying. He will take some sacred earth paint and he will paint the baby's face while he is praying. That becomes the child's first blessing after it is born. That blessing goes to the parents, too, during the ceremony. As part of the prayer the elder announces the name that has been chosen for the child. The name is called aloud so that all may hear, and it is followed by wishes of good luck and long life. This custom is still very common among the Bloods. Most adults have a special name, in the Blackfoot language, which was given to them in this way. My mother has this to add, regarding naming:

"Mothers usually give their children nicknames, by which they are known in their young days. This is often a description of the child's notable features, like Round-Faced Girl, Long-Haired Girl, or Plump Girl. Usually when the child gets a little older these names are dropped. However, one of my sons was nicknamed Black Eyes, and he is still going by that name today.

"I hardly know of our elders to give names that actually describe the child in some way. Other tribes do that, but we usually give names inherited from our ancestors. Most of our famous names from long ago are still being carried by tribe members today. For instance, one of my sons was recently

[A] [i.e., thirty days after birth--Analyst]

person on the reserve to let the cattle graze there. This practice began when Eagle Bear accepted the first four-dollar payment. That was in the year number 1904 when I was born. Small Priest [the People's name for Father Dusette] baptized me, but he didn't give me a name. I don't know why I wasn't called after my father, Dog Child. When I was not many days old, I was called First Rid and I grew up with that name.

When I was a little bit old-personlike [when first active as a child], my father taught me to ride. This was during the number four winter of my life. There was still a lot of horseback riding then and a lot of travois for transportation. Very few had slim-wheelers [buggies]. I was tied on a horse, and the horse was tied to a picket. Sometimes I used to go to sleep on the horse. My mother made a pad saddle out of blue jeans and stuffed with big-head fur [sheep's wool]. There were stirrups at that time; I used to see them, they were made of wood. But my stirrups were rawhide thongs, which fit my young feet better.

I grew up in the land of the Men with Many Wives [Cardston, Alberta, is a Mormon town]. My father was a hunter and he had many rifles; a slim-gum-arrow [.30/30 caliber]; a double-barrelled hunting gun; also a Number 22, called a gopher rifle. And he was one of the first to own a Number 303 rifle [.303 caliber]. He set traps for coyote, beaver, and muskrat.

My father made me eat all kinds of deer. The People of the long-ago liked to eat the part of the mother animal that the baby animal sucked on. The only thing they didn't eat is the milk of the big white ? ·ds [mountain sheep]. I heard that this milk is very bitter.

When I killed an elk, my father showed me they have seven nest lumps [nipples], not four or six or eight. He showed me that badgers have blood clots on their ribs. We sprinkled gun powder on the badger's blood and from looking at our reflection in the blood we knew how long we were going to live. My father saw from his

There are, however, one or two instances of wealthy men letting a child of theirs go to another family and several more instances where the families were of average wealth and quite able to care for their children. On one occasion, wealthy parents had had bad luck in raising children and let their latest child go to give him a chance of survival. For the same reason the son of a chief was adopted by a neighbor who was not a relative, who had no children and wanted one. In yet another instance the wife of a fairly wealthy man had twins, a boy and a girl, and the father's older brother adopted the son when he was about four months old. The two children, now over 20, do not yet know they are twins.

In one case where the mother had some property and was asked to allow the child to be adopted she deliberated a long time and finally said,

> "You have come to take my child away from me. But you must promise that you are going to look after the boy in every way. You know that the father died and there is no one to look after us. Now you can take the boy and I'll give you two horses, a gray and a gelding, both broken. I'll give you these horses so that you will look after the boy in every way."

She further added that if the child should be unhappy he must be brought back. In a few days he was returned to his mother and she said that they were to keep the horses, even though the child had come back. Apparently it is customary, in the few cases where property has been exchanged, not to return this if circumstances demand the return of the child.

BAND AFFILIATIONS

At one time the Blood were associated in bands, but when they settled down to sedentary life on the reserve, changes occurred and the functioning of the bands was disrupted. At the present time band association is a tenuous thing. Some of the younger people do not even know to which band they belong. However, most of the Blood are conscious that such a grouping does exist. Apparently band affiliations are not considered in the question of adoption, at least nowadays. Often times, of course, a child does go to a family of its own band, but this is due to the frequency of adoptions by close relatives, rather than a desire to keep the child in the band. Whether the adopted child belongs to the band of his father or of his foster father is uncertain.

Some say the child retains the band membership of his own father, or if the father is unknown or a white man, he should belong to his mother's father's group. Others insist that the child belongs to the band of his foster parents and his children belong there also. However, band affiliations seem easily changed to fit circumstances, for both children and adults. Loyalties seem to be to the group with which one is living, as was true in the old days.

UNCOMPLETED ADOPTIONS

Not all adoptions are completed. There are cases where tentative arrangements have been made and then cancelled. Many years ago there were two married brothers, the younger one having a small daughter. The wife of the older brother frequently took the child to her own tent and kept her until her mother fetched her away. One day, the mother came for the baby and, after nursing her, she gave her the name, Kept-to-Oneself. When she heard this the older brother's wife told her husband, "We had better not take the child again. I don't think they will let it go. I heard them giving it the name Kept-to-Oneself." So they dropped the whole idea of adoption which had been in their minds. In this way no request was made and no refusal given, but the mind of each party was clearly revealed to the other.

More outright refusals may be given when a direct request is made. But my impression, and it is only an impression, is that in most cases the feelings of all concerned are known before any formal request is made.

As an indication of how uncertain a thing adoption can be there is the instance of a young boy who was adopted twice. He was adopted when he was four or five years old by his mother's sister and her husband, who had no children and were anxious to have one. A year or so later this couple separated and a former husband of the boy's mother more or less forced the foster father into letting the child go to him. Since the child has grown up he speaks of both men as "father" but has little to do with either.

POSITION OF THE AGENCY

So far as the Agency is concerned only those adoptions which follow the regular Canadian legal procedure are recognized (John Pugh, Indian Agent for the Blood Reserve, personal communication). But few Indians take the trou-